

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

East-West School of International Studies

Middle School - High School 281

**46-21 Colden Avenue
Queens
NY 11355**

Principal: Ben Sherman

Dates of review: May 5 – 6, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Salvador A. Fernandez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The East-West School of International Studies is a middle and high school with 426 students from grade 6 through grade 11. The school population comprises 20% Black, 21% Hispanic, 5% White, and 53% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 94.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The East-West School of International Studies has continued to make good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report. The principal has created a collaborative community that promotes high expectations for students' achievement. The school makes the most of its space provided in the campus to ensure that students have positive learning environment that is welcoming and engaging. There is a strong culture of mutual trust and respect between students and teachers that has been created through embedding rituals and routines in all classes. During Morning Muster, rituals are reinforced daily. The principals greet the student in English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean before starting the morning routines which provides all stakeholders with an open-microphone to make announcements. The highly effective advisory program which guides students in setting academic and social goals has empowered students to take ownership for their learning by tracking their progress. Advisors reflect on the summative and formative data gathered and plan individual achievement goals with students. They also communicate these goals with families via a very effective on-line system. However, there is potential to further develop individual student learning goals to include interim benchmarks that strategically monitor and evaluate student progress in all core subjects.

The school has established strong partnerships with outside organizations that impact positively on the social, emotional and academic growth of students and staff. Students and teachers feel well supported and are not afraid to take risks. School leaders provide teachers with the opportunity to meet weekly and share best practices. The school has developed an innovative curriculum which includes interdisciplinary links and project-based learning that motivates, provides exciting learning opportunities and reinforces students' learning by making connections between core subjects. However, the school does not have a formal structure during weekly professional collaboration meetings to ensure that teachers are assessing student work, modifying curriculum and planning differentiated lessons to challenge students' at all levels. The school has established an effective data management system for collecting, recording and using formative and summative data to track student progress and develop flexible groupings in all core subjects. However, there is still opportunity for teachers to extend their knowledge in analyzing and interpreting data school-wide in all core subjects to identify patterns and trends to inform and guide instructional practices.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has created a strong collaborative community that promotes high expectations for students' achievement and action plans are systemic and include measurable interim goals and timeframes for school improvement.
- The school has a very effective system in place for collecting, recording and using formative and summative data to track student progress and develop strong flexible groupings.
- Rituals and routines are clearly embedded in the school culture which supports a climate of mutual trust and respect among teachers and students.
- Students are empowered to take ownership for their learning through an excellent advisory program which helps them set achievement goals and track progress.
- Parents are extremely satisfied with the dedication and commitment of school leaders and faculty in regards to communicating with families about their child's progress and what next steps are required for further improvement.
- The school has developed an innovative curriculum which includes interdisciplinary links and project-based learning that motivates, provides exciting learning opportunities and reinforces students' learning by making interesting connections between core subjects.
- The school has established strong partnerships with outside organizations that positively impact on students' social, emotional and academic growth.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the breadth and depth of data analysis and interpretation school-wide in all core subjects to identify patterns and trends to inform and guide instructional practices.
- Enhance content level teachers' ability to create individual student learning goals that include interim benchmarks that will strategically monitor and evaluate student progress in all core subjects.
- Formalize and structure professional collaboration during weekly common planning meetings to ensure that teachers assess student work, modify curriculum and plan differentiated lessons to challenge students' at all levels.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has made great strides since the last Quality Review in further developing a data management system which tracks student progress and aids school leaders in developing flexible groupings. School leaders and faculty are extremely effective in recording formative and summative data to identify the specific skill needs of all subgroups. During advisory meetings students and teachers meet individually to go over academic expectations which guides students to take ownership for their learning and keeps them on pace to meet learning goals, which has become embedded in school's culture. Teachers meet weekly by departments to go over student work, analyze formative and summative data, as well as attendance and behavior to gain a deeper understanding of students' individual needs in their core subjects. This is effective in improving the curriculum to challenge and engage students in learning. Teachers formally assess students three times during a particular unit of studies to make sure students understand what is being covered and are on track to meeting goals. Teachers have started and will continue to deepen their work in analyzing and interpreting formative and summative data in all core subjects to identify patterns and trends to better inform and guide their instructional practices. That this work is improving student outcomes is evidenced by the results from this year's English language arts state test in which students' performance scores went from 78% to 94% at Levels 3 and 4.

School leaders and faculty do an excellent job communicating with families about student progress, attendance and behavior concerns. Advisors are the conduit in sending progress reports to keep parents informed of their child's progress. Parents are extremely pleased with the advisors because they have one person that will provide a full composite of their child's needs. As one parent stated, "this is like a family instead of a school." All the parents acknowledge the effectiveness of the on-line communication system the school provides for them to track their child's progress. They also stated that at East-West students enjoy learning because lessons are engaging, challenging and fun through project-based and hands-on activities. Students are provided with a syllabus from all their classes which ensures students take ownership for learning and track their progress. These syllabi are sent home to families and are posted on the school's web page. Weekly updates are sent home informing parents of activities being conducted in class and provide parents with tips on how to enhance their child's learning at home.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal has created a collaborative community that promotes high expectations for students. Students’ achievements are embedded in the schools’ rituals and routines. Hallway and classroom displays proudly celebrate student work and projects, promoting a culture of success that is conducive to learning. The model advisory program contributes to enhancing the schools climate creating a nurturing, caring and reflective environment which incorporates goal setting into the school culture.

School leaders and faculty provide constant opportunities for all stakeholders to come together and understand the school’s expectations. The school leadership team which is made up of parents and staff meets to discuss and develop the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Teachers meet weekly to go over formative and summative data to set departmental grade and class goals and make revisions as needed. During department meetings teachers go over subject-specific learning, plan curriculum and tailor lessons for students to meet or exceed department and class goals. Teachers also discuss attendance and behavior data which ensures that no student goes unnoticed and are all on track towards meeting their goals. School leaders and faculty have an effective system in place to generate school-wide, departmental, grade, and class learning goals. The goals are beginning to be internalized by students empowering students to take ownership of their learning. However, individual student learning goals are not yet set by the teachers and the students. Individual learning goals for students lack interim benchmarks with specific timeframes. Without these structures, the school is not in a position to strategically monitor and evaluate student progress in all core subjects.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school has developed an innovative curriculum which includes interdisciplinary links and project-based learning that motivates, provides exciting learning opportunities and reinforces students’ learning by making connections between core subjects. School leaders and faculty have developed a highly effective system that enables students to apply skills learned in all core subjects. School leaders provide teachers with the opportunity to meet weekly to assess student work and make revisions to the curriculum as needed that engages students in project-based learning which students enjoy and find learning purposeful. All curricula, including the very progressive foreign language program that provides student with an opportunity to learn Chinese, Japanese and Korean, are standards-based and have been modified to include interdisciplinary and real-life connections to accelerate students’ learning. As stated by one student, “not only are we learning a language that will help us in the 21st Century, we are also learning about the culture.”

School leaders and faculty have embedded rituals and routines in the school culture which supports a climate of mutual trust and respect among teachers and students. During Morning Muster students and staff gather in the auditorium to go over morning

rituals, academic updates and upcoming cultural events which support the school's vision. As stated by one student, "Teachers make learning fun for us to meet our goals." Students really enjoy Morning Muster because it sets a positive tone for the day. The school's welcoming and supportive climate provides students with real life learning in a safe and nurturing environment which promotes social and academic growth. Teachers and students feel supported by the administration. School leaders and faculty have developed an environment that is student focused, conducive to learning where students enjoy coming to school and are excited to learn.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

School leaders have an effective informal observation structure which provides teachers with immediate feedback on individual needs and strengths to enhance their instructional practice. School leaders and faculty collaboratively set the school-wide goals for enhancing the advisory program and integrating writing across the curriculum. They determine what strategies and activities can be implemented to improve pedagogy. Teachers are encouraged to meet weekly to share best practices and look at student work. However, the school does not have a formal structure to ensure that teachers are meeting during common planning time to assess students' progress, modify curriculum and plan differentiated lessons to challenge students' achievement at all levels. Teachers informally schedule inter-class visitations and provide each other with constructive feedback to enhance their craft.

The school has established strong partnerships with outside organizations that impact positively on students' social, emotional and academic growth. Students are exposed to many cultural organizations to enhance their understanding of the different cultures in their community. Community consultants work hands-on with teachers and students providing invaluable resources to the school which reinforces the school's vision. School leaders and faculty welcome all these organizations as part of their school community which has impacted positively on the academic, social and personal growth of their students.

The newly structured inquiry team target population consists of fourteen English language learners which tested far below expected level on the diagnostic test administered at the beginning of this school year. They found that the major area of weakness was writing, especially in organization and content. The team is using the English Regents rubric to provide students with clear expectations and a vehicle for them to track their progress. The goal is for the target population to go up two levels on the organizational and development of ideas sections of the rubric. The target population works with their English teacher weekly to improve writing skills. Ongoing assessments have shown student improvement. School leaders and faculty have integrated writing school-wide in all core subjects to reinforce student learning in all grades.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

School-wide plans are systemic and include measurable interim goals and timeframes for school improvement. School leaders and faculty have an effective system to monitor and evaluate plans by analyzing formative and summative data monthly in order to make adjustments to plans as needed, to increase student outcomes, internalized and revised by all stakeholders. Teachers meet daily with students in an advisory role to set and review student goals, track progress of scholarship, credit accumulation and Regents to ensure students are on course towards graduation. The innovative curriculum which includes interdisciplinary links, project-based and real life learning opportunities motivates and excites students to make connections between core subjects which reinforce their learning. Teachers meet weekly to share best practices and make adjustments as needed. The school has an effective system for collecting, recording and using formative and summative data to track student achievement and develop flexible groupings. Project-based learning is prevalent in the school's culture where teachers are constantly assessing students' projects and challenging students by providing feedback using thought-provoking questions to improve students' understanding.

The principal promotes a collaborative culture that embeds high expectations for student achievement that has been internalized by all stakeholders. As one student stated, "our principal is peaceful, interesting and all about education". Since the last review, school leaders and faculty continue to seek new ways to further develop their skills of analyzing and interpreting formative and summative assessment to develop curriculum in all core subjects that is challenging and differentiated to improve student outcomes. This was evident by the English language arts result which showed an increase of approximately 16% increase of students performing on Level 3 and 4 from the previous year.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: East-West School of International Studies	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				X
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			X	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				X
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?				X
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X	
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?				X
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?				X
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X

Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed